

“Verily, the trial will come from here, the calamity will come from here, where the horn of Satan rises.” The latter statement is referring to the East.

Their ability and strength

Allah has given the jinn power and ability that He has not given humans. Allah has informed us of some of their ability, including great speed and movement.

One of the *afreet* of Satanic Jinn promised Solomon that he would be able to bring the throne of Sheba to Jerusalem in a period of time that was so short that a man would not be able to stand from his place of sitting. But one who had knowledge of the Book said, “I will bring it before your gaze returns to you.” Allah has described this incident in the Quran with the following verses,

قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِّنْ مَّقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي

“A stalwart of the Jinn said: I will bring it to you before you can rise from your place. Lo! I verily am strong and trusty for such work. One with whom was knowledge of the scripture said: I will bring it to you before your gaze returns to you. And when he saw it set in his presence, and he said, ‘This is from the bounties of my Lord.’” (*al-Naml* 39-40).

They preceded mankind in matters related to space

The jinn used to go to the lowest heaven to eavesdrop on the inhabitants of the heavens in order to find out what event would occur in

the future. When the Prophet was sent with his message the number of “guards” in the heavens were increased. Allah says in the Quran,

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَبًا ۖ وَأَنَّا كُنَّا
نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقْعِدَ لِّلسَّمْعِ ۖ فَمَن يَسْتَمِعُ ٱلْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ وِشْهَابًا رَّصَدًا

“And (the Jinn who had listened to the Quran said): We had sought the heaven but had found it filled with strong warders and meteors. And we used to sit on places (high) therein to listen. But he who listens now finds a flame in wait for him” (*al-Jinn S-9*).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself described how the jinn tried to steal the messages in the heaven. Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) informed him, “When Allah decrees a matter in heaven, the angels move their wings in submission to His word which is like a chain on a smooth stone. When their hearts are delivered from fear they say, ‘What did your Lord say?’ and receive the reply, ‘That which He said is the truth and He is the Most High and the Most Great.’ Then those who listen by stealth hear it (i.e., the jinn), and they are like this, some above others (and Sufyan, a narrator, illustrated this point by turning his hand over and separating the fingers). Then one who hears the word passes it on to the one below him, and so forth until one of them passes it to the tongue of a soothsayer or diviner. Often a flame catches him before he is able to pass it on. He then mixes with it one hundred lies. People then ask, ‘Isn’t it true that he not made such a statement on a specific date,’ and he is believed because of that one word which was heard from the heavens.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*.)

Superstitions during the period of ignorance

Knowledge of the reason why they were being pelted with meteors put an end to superstitious belief that the people of ignorance used to pass on. Ibn Abbas narrated from one of the companions of the

Prophet (peace be upon him), from among the Ansar, who said that they were with the Prophet one night and they witnessed a shooting star. The Prophet asked them, “What did you say during the days of ignorance concerning a shooting star like that?” They said, “Allah and His Messenger know best. We used to say that on that night an important person was born or an important person had died.” The Prophet said, “It does not do so because of the death or birth of anyone. But when Allah decides an affair, the inhabitants who carry the Throne sing His praise, and so do the ones of the next heaven and so forth until the lowest heaven. Then those are close to those who carry the Throne say to those who carry the Throne, ‘What did your Lord say?’ And they are then informed about what Allah has decreed. And they pass this news to the next heaven and so forth until it reaches the lowest heaven. Then the jinn listen in and pass on the word to their servants. When the angels notice them they attack them with meteors. If all that they [the jinn] would relate is only that which they actually had heard, they would be truthful; but, instead, they mix it with lies and make additions to it.” (This hadith was recorded in *Sahih Muslim*.)

Their knowledge in building and other crafts

Allah has informed us that the jinn which were subjected to the control of the Prophet Solomon performed many feats which were evidence of their physical ability, intelligence and skill. Allah says in the Quran,

وَمِنَ الْجِنَّةِ مَن يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ ۖ وَمَن يَزِغْ مِنْهُمْ
عَن أَمْرِنَا نُنْزِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٧﴾ يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ
مِن مَّحْرِبٍ وَتَمْثِيلٍ وَجِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُورٍ رَّاسِيَتٍ ۚ

“And (We gave him) certain of the jinn who worked before him by permission of his Lord. And such of them as deviated from Our

command, them We caused to taste the punishment of flaming fire. They made for him what he willed: Synagogues and statues, basins like wells and boilers built into the ground” (*Saba* 12-13). And, perhaps, they also had the ability to communicate between locations and reach places in a way similar to radios and televisions. Ibn Taimiya stated that one of the *shaikhs* who had contact with the jinn told him that the jinn showed them something sparkling like water or glass. And they showed him therein whatever they wanted of news [apparently it was something like a crystal ball] The one reporting this to ibn Taimiya said, “They would bring the speech of the one who was seeking my help to me and I would respond and they would take my speech back to that person.”

Perhaps they were able to discover things, like the technology of radios and televisions, a long time ago.

Their ability to take on other shapes

The jinn have the ability to take on the shapes of humans or animals. On the day of the Battle of Badr, Satan approached the polytheists in the form of a man called Suraaqa ibn Malik and he promised the polytheists aid and victory on that day. Concerning this event, Allah has revealed the following,

وَإِذْ زَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَّكُمْ^ط

“And when Satan made their deeds seem fair to them and said: No one of mankind can conquer you this day, for I am your protector.” (*al-Anfaal*48).

But when the armies met and Satan saw the angels descending from the sky, he fled. [The above verse continues:]

^ط *Majmu Fatawa*, vol. 11, p. 309.